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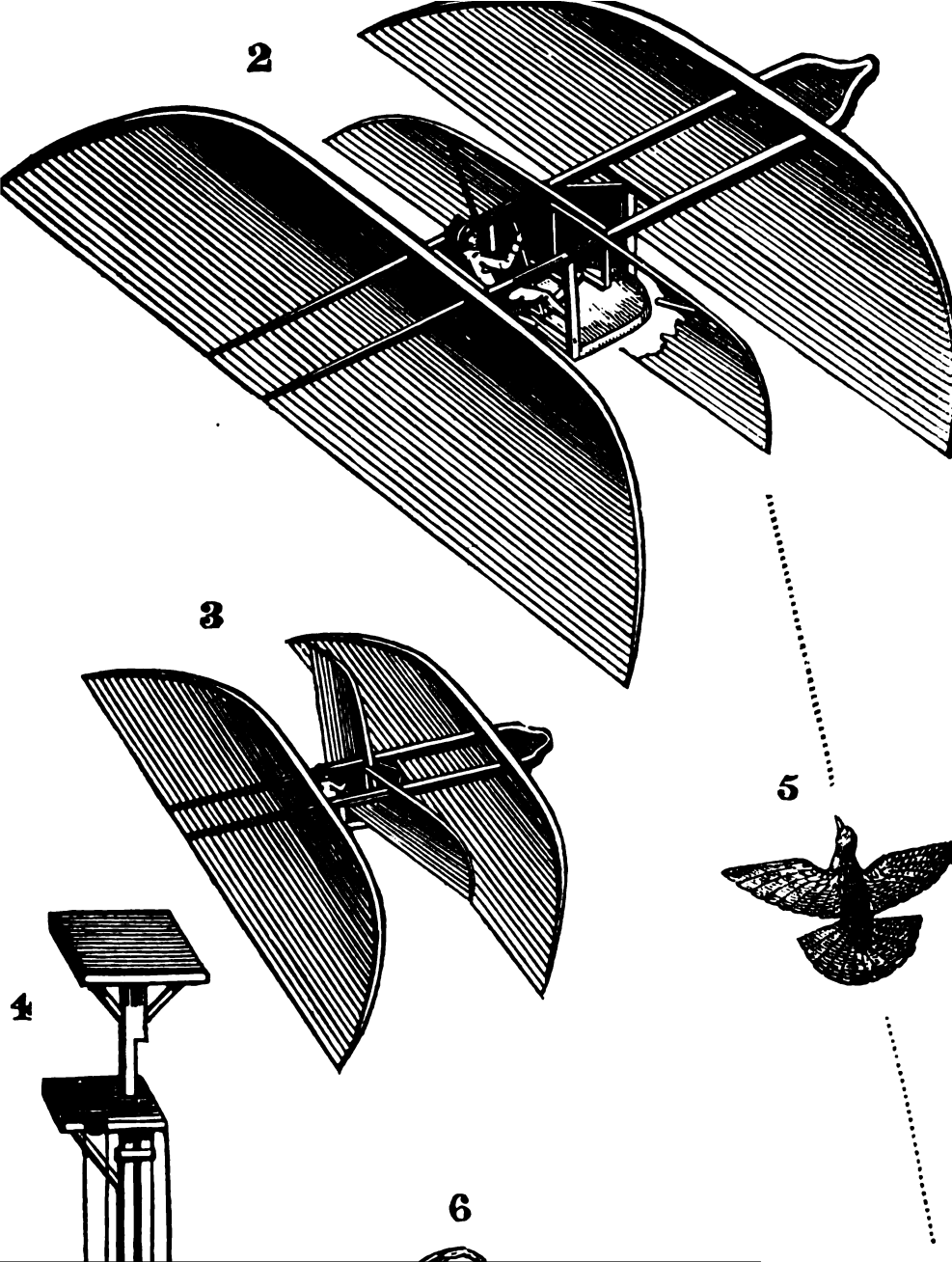
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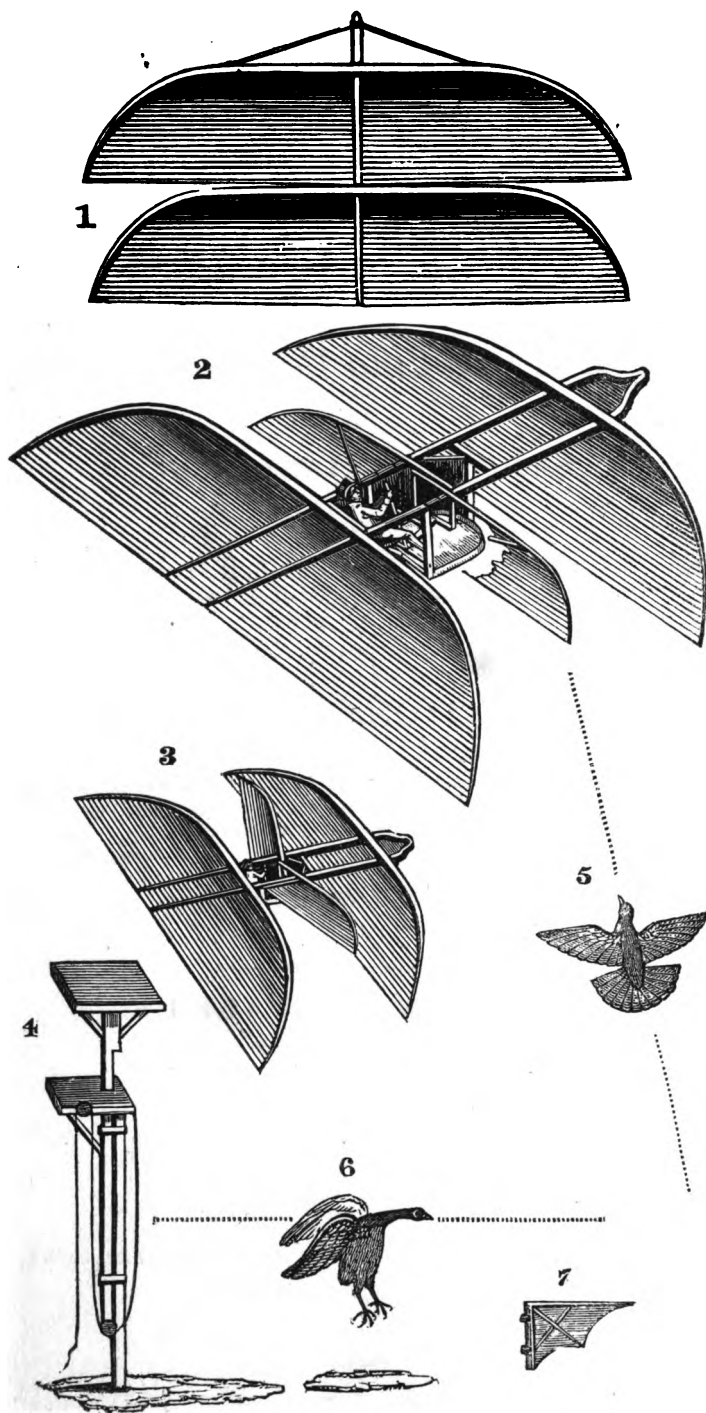
*A treatise upon ærostation, or, the
art of travelling through the air, by ...*



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TREATISE
UPON
ÆROSTATION;



OR, THE

Art of Travelling through the Air,

BY

MECHANICAL MEANS ALONE;

WITH A

FULL EXPLANATION OF THE NATURAL PRINCIPLES BY
WHICH BIRDS ARE ENABLED TO FLY;

LIKEWISE

INSTRUCTIONS AND PLANS

FOR MAKING A FLYING CAR WITH WINGS, IN WHICH A MAN MAY SIT, AND, BY
WORKING A SMALL LEVER, CAUSE HIMSELF TO SOAR THROUGH
THE AIR WITH GREAT FACILITY.

ILLUSTRATED WITH PLATES.

BY THOMAS WALKER.

SECOND EDITION.

BRISTOL:

PRINTED BY WILLIAM HENRY SOMERTON, AT THE MERCURY-OFFICE,
AND MAY BE HAD OF THE AUTHOR.

1831.

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P R E F A C E .

I AM laying before the public a treatise upon a subject, perhaps, as extraordinary in its nature as any thing that has lately come before them. Since I first published my "Thoughts upon the Art of Navigating the Air," I have greatly improved my plan for accomplishing that desirable attainment; and, as the first edition is now out of print, I am induced to offer a second edition to the public, wherein I shall shew how to produce a sustaining power upon the air, in a *twofold* degree to what I had before discovered; also a plan for *perfect* steerage, with a very *superior* method for launching the machine upon the air; and, after a candid perusal, should it meet with approbation from the friends to arts and sciences, my utmost pride will be gratified. The flight of birds, although so common and familiar to our sight, is certainly as great a phenomenon as any in the creation; and artificial flying, when accomplished, may be considered as one of the greatest wonders of the mechanic arts; which I firmly believe attainable upon the plan I have suggested.

In this little work, I have shewn that birds' wings do not increase their expansion in exact ratio with the increased weight of their bodies; I have given a demonstration of the *cause* of the projectile motion of birds, the discovery of a true knowledge of which has been overlooked by philosophers in all ages; which, with other discoveries, I trust will prove that I have given consistency to what henceforth may be denominated the *science* of flying, and which may alone be deemed of considerable importance to science, had nothing more than that been brought forward; but as I have gone much further, and have advanced arguments, and

PREFACE.

given plans for applying the principles of nature to art so as to render the *art of flying practicable*, the importance of this little treatise becomes obvious, more particularly so if we take into consideration the various purposes to which artificial flying may be applied.

I have made a resolution to suppress, in my work, every thought that confidence could suggest, beyond what I could give demonstration of, along with the clearest directions how to attain the end in view. Notwithstanding, from the novelty and singularity of the subject, I do expect to meet with some degree of scepticism. I wish to assure my readers that I do not write to amuse, but to instruct; my sole aim is to deliver my thoughts to the public in hopes that men of *genius* may turn their attention to a subject that may not before now have attracted their notice, that, by their aid and assistance, the art may be brought into practice: and as this country stands unrivalled in arts, I hope we shall not be long without a society for the encouragement of the art of flying. Columbus was laughed at when he talked of a continent beyond the Atlantic; but, visionary as he might appear, he found it—and *wise* men lost it!

Since I published the first edition of this treatise, copies have been taken into Holland, Germany, France, America, and other countries; and in the *Literary Gazette*, of Sept. 11, 1830, there is a report of there being a Mr. Genet, in America, and three rivals in France, all busily employed in making machines for travelling in the air, and all are equally sanguine of success.

A TREATISE, &c.

WE learn, from several authors, that, in different ages of the world, the art of flying has been attempted by various means, all of which have hitherto failed of success. When we take into consideration the different methods which are recorded to have been tried, we cannot be surprised that they have all failed, since, compared with what is contained in the following pages, they will obviously appear to be nothing more than mere whims and contrivances, all utterly destitute of the true nature and science of flying.

I am conscious that many of my readers, who have never been led to notice the remarks that many eminently learned men have made upon this art, will be tempted, at the first sight of my title-page, to ridicule a treatise upon artificial flying; for there is not a more common saying, when a person has taken some great difficulty in hand, than that such a thing is as impossible to be done *as for one to fly in the air*. I do assure all such, that my treatise is not founded upon a whim of the moment, but from mature deliberation on the display of nature. The study of the works of nature has been to me, during the greatest part of my life, a source of amusement and inexpressible delight. The natural history of birds has particularly occupied my attention, and that enviable faculty which they possess of flying, has greatly excited my curiosity, and led me to that study by which I have obtained a *true knowledge* of the mechanical principles by which they fly; a knowledge which I do not hesitate to declare has hitherto remained undiscovered, although it has been the object of the study and contemplation of many of the most eminent philosophers of past ages.

That great observer of the works of nature, Solomon, did not overlook the subject of flying, but speaks of it in his book of Proverbs, xxx, 18, 19. "There be three things which are too wonderful for me, yea, four, which I know not; *the way of an eagle in the air*, the way of a serpent upon a rock," &c. I beg also to remind such of my readers as doubt the possibility of flying, that many useful and valuable mechanical inventions, which are now rendered complete, and become common, would, a century or two past, have been treated as visionary and impracticable; or had they bee

accomplished at such periods, their effects would have been attributed to witchcraft. I have not the least doubt of being successful in the art of flying, if I had the opportunity to give it a fair trial. My invention for attaining the art is founded *entirely upon the principles of nature*; and although these principles are as old as the creation, they have never, until now, been properly attended to. How much are we indebted to the study of nature for discoveries of the greatest importance; and from this delightful study many more are yet to be expected.

The love of pleasure is natural to man, and to gratify this propensity he eagerly attends to every artificial entertainment that is offered to him; he resorts to theatres and operas, to Newmarket, and other haunts of vanity and folly, as if pleasure were no where else to be found; at the same time, what an inexhaustible fund of entertainment is overlooked by all but a few, although constantly displayed in the wonderful exhibition of the works of nature.

What a pity it is that the minds of men are not more generally and forcibly struck with the pure and tranquil delights resulting from the universal study of nature. What riot, confusion, waste of time, loss of money, and of health, might be avoided, if this pleasing and truly enlightening study could be made fashionable. What an infinite stock of ideas it would create; how much it would enrich the human mind, and afford matter for social conversation and entertainment, far superior to the unimportant subjects which too generally occupy the minds and tongues of men.

I will now present my readers with some account of various schemes which have been tried to accomplish the art of flying, and shall shew the cause of their insufficiency. I shall explain the natural mechanical means by which birds are enabled to fly, and my readers will then be able to judge how far my invention for flying corresponds with the principles of nature, and is thereby calculated to succeed. I shall shew likewise the comparative difference between the weight of the humming bird and the condor; also, the different expansion of the wings. I shall compare the weight of a man with the weight of the condor, and thereby determine the necessary dimensions of a pair of wings which would enable a man to fly; and lastly, I will explain an experiment which I have made, in order to demonstrate the principles of artificial flying, and give directions for making a machine wherein a man may sit, and, by working a pair of wings with a lever, be able to fly with as much safety and ease as a bird.

I have been in the habit of dissecting a great many birds, for making a collection of skeletons, and since studied very

minutely the mechanism of their wings, tails, and all the parts which they employ in flying.

I have long been accustomed to contemplate a bird as a living machine, formed by the Almighty Creator, either to run upon the earth, to dive in the waters, or to ascend into and fly through the air; and when I examine its various parts, and find such an exquisite display of wisdom, in each being formed so perfectly to answer the use it is applied to; when I see the effect of the whole, that such a wonderfully organized, animated piece of matter can quit the earth and soar aloft in the air, it appears to me a miracle, and I am struck with admiration.

It is many years since I was first led to think, by the study of birds and their means of flying, that if an artificial machine were formed with wings, in imitation of the mechanism of one of those beautiful living machines, and applied in the very same way upon the air, there could be no doubt of its being made to fly; for it is an axiom in philosophy, that the same cause will ever produce the same effect.

It is easy to demonstrate, that a bird is no more able to fly than a man without the mechanical effect of wings;* therefore, when a man is furnished with a car to sit in, and wings upon the following plan, which is in perfect accordance with the principles of nature, there can be no reason to doubt of his being able to fly as well as a bird; and when my readers are made thoroughly acquainted with both the natural and artificial means of flying, I flatter myself they will then be willing to acknowledge that my scheme is a very rational one, highly calculated to insure success in the accomplishment of the art of flying, one of the most extraordinary and desirable arts with which we can be acquainted.

Although I am very sanguine in my expectations of success, (for I positively assert, that flying cannot be accomplished on any other plan than the one I propose), I, unfortunately, have ever found myself unable, from my professional avocations and other circumstances, to put it in practice, or I should long since have made the experiment.

I am therefore induced to publish my plan, in the hope that some of the lovers of arts and sciences, when I have laid before them a scheme so practicable, will readily be induced,

* The ostrich, in the torrid regions of Africa; the emu, in the extensive plains of Paraguay, in South America, which, standing erect, is about seven feet high, its legs are three feet long, its thighs are nearly as thick as the thighs of a man; it runs so swift that the fleetest dogs are foiled by it; the cassowary and the dodo, in the Molucca Islands; and the penguins, in the Straits of Magellan and the South Sea Islands: all these birds are as utterly incapable of flying as a man, none of them being provided with wings for that purpose.

for the honour of science and our country, to bring it into practice; and demonstrate to their fellow mortals how they may gain a perfect dominion over another element.

In almost every nation where arts and sciences have flourished, persons have manifested a wish to discover the art of flying. In Rome, and in Paris particularly, different persons, and in ages remote from each other, have tried experiments with wings formed of various materials, which have been fastened to their shoulders and their extended arms; but none of them succeeded, there not being strength sufficient in a man's arms to enable him to fly with detached wings fastened to him in such a manner, leaving the whole weight of his body unsupported.

Friar Bacon, who lived nearly five centuries ago, wrote upon the subject, and he affirms that the art of flying is possible; and many others have been of opinion, that by means of artificial wings affixed to the arms or legs, a man might fly as well as a bird.

The philosophers of the reign of King Charles the Second, were much engaged with this art. The famous Bishop Wilkins, who, in 1672, published a treatise upon flying, was so confident of its practicability, that he says, he does not question but that in future ages it will become as common to hear a man call for his wings, when going a journey, as it is now to call for his boots and spurs.

In the year 1709, as we gather from a letter published in France, in 1784, a Portuguese, Friar de Gusman, applied to the king to encourage him in the invention of a flying machine. The principle upon which it was constructed, if indeed it had any principle, seems to have been that of a paper kite; the machine was in the form of a bird, and contained several tubes through which the wind was to pass in order to fill a certain sail, which was to elevate it; and when the wind was deficient, the same was to be effected by means of bellows concealed within the body of the machine. The ascent was also to be promoted by the *electric* attraction of pieces of amber placed in the top, and by two *spheres* inclosing *magnets* in the same situation.

These silly inventions shew the very low state of science at that time in Portugal, especially as the king, in order to encourage him in his further experiments in such an useful invention, granted him the first vacant place in his college of Barcelos, or Santerim, with the first professorship in the university of Coimbra, and an annual pension of 600,000 reis, during his life. Of this De Gusman, it is also related, that, in the year 1736, he made a wicker basket of about seven or eight feet diameter, and covered it with paper, which raised

itself about 200 feet in the air, and the effect was generally attributed to witchcraft.

Mr. Willoughby, after observing that the pectoral muscles of a man, in proportion to his weight, are many degrees too weak for flying, recommends to him who would attempt the art with the desire of success, to contrive and adapt his wings in such a manner, that he may work them with his legs and not with his arms, because the muscles of the legs are much stronger.

The celebrated Lord Bacon wrote on the subject of flying, and believed it practicable; but it seems that he could no more direct how it was to be done than any other who had written before him on the same subject.

Thus much, for the satisfaction of my readers, I have thought proper to make mention of what has been attempted for the accomplishment of this wonderful art; but were I to adduce all that has been said and done, at different periods of time, I could compile a large volume of that alone, which would answer no other end than that of curiosity, and to show that no one has ever understood the *natural* means of flying, which is the *only* knowledge that can guide us to the completion of artificial flying, and which I hope and trust will be clearly demonstrated in this treatise.

As I shall have occasion to refer to various birds, possessing different powers of flight, in illustration of my design; I here introduce the history of the condor, for the information of such of my readers as may not be acquainted with it.

The condor is a native of America, and hitherto naturalists have been divided whether to refer it to the species of the eagle, or to that of the vulture. Its great strength, and activity, seem to give it a claim to rank among the former, whilst the baldness of its head and neck is thought to degrade it to a rank amongst the latter. It is, however, fully sufficient to describe its manners, form, weight, expansion, and power, and I therefore leave it to nomenclators to decide upon its class. If size, for it is by much the largest bird that flies, and strength, combined with rapidity of flight, and rapacity, deserve pre-eminence, then no bird can be put in competition with it; for the condor possesses, in a higher degree than the eagle, all the qualities that render it formidable, not only to the feathered tribe, but to beasts, and even to man himself.

Acosta, Garcilasso, and Desmarchais assert, that it measures eighteen feet across the wings when expanded: its beak is so strong as to pierce the body of a cow; and it is positively asserted that two of them are capable of devouring that animal. They do not even abstain from attacking man himself; but fortunately there are but few of the species. The Indians

say that they will carry off a deer, or a young calf in **their** talons, as an eagle would a hare, or rabbit; that their **sight** is piercing, and their manners terrific. According to **modern** authors, they only come down to the sea-coast at certain **seasons**, particularly when it is supposed their prey fails **them** upon the land; they then feed upon dead fish, and such **other** nutritious substances as the sea throws upon shore.

Condamine says, he has frequently seen them in **several** parts of the mountains of Quito, and has observed them **hovering** over a flock of sheep; and he thinks they would, at **one** particular time, have attempted to carry some of them off, **had** they not been scared away by the shepherds. Labat says **that** this bird has been described to him, by those who have **seen** it, as having a body as large as a sheep, and that its flesh **is** as tough and disagreeable as carrion. The Spaniards, **residing** in that country, dread its depredations, there having been *many instances of its carrying off children*. Mr. Strong, the master of a ship, relates that, as he was sailing along the coast of Chili, in the thirty-third degree of south latitude, he observed a bird sitting upon a high cliff near the shore, which one of the ship's company shot with a leaden bullet and killed. They were greatly surprised when they beheld its magnitude, for when the wings were extended, they measured thirteen feet from one tip to the other: one of the quill feathers was two feet four inches and three quarters in length, and an inch and a half in circumference.

Mons. Feuillée has given a still more circumstantial account of this amazing bird. In a valley of Illo, in Peru, says he, "I discovered a condor perched on a high rock, before me; I approached within gun-shot and fired; but, as my piece was only charged with swan-shot, the lead was not heavy enough to bring the bird down. I perceived, however, by its manner of flying, that it was wounded; and it was with a good deal of difficulty that it flew to another rock, about five hundred yards distant on the sea-shore. I therefore charged again with ball, and hit the bird under the throat, which made it mine. I accordingly ran up to seize it, but even in death it was terrible, and defended itself upon its back, with its claws extended against me, so that I scarcely knew how to lay hold of it. Had it not been mortally wounded, I should have found it no easy matter to take it, but I at last dragged it down from the rock, and, with the assistance of one of the seamen, I carried it to my tent, to make a coloured drawing of it. The wings of this bird, which I measured *very exactly*, were twelve feet three inches (English) from tip to tip. The great feathers, which were of a beautiful shining black, were two feet four inches long: the thickness of the beak was proportionable to the rest

of the body, the length about four inches, the point hooked downwards, and white at its extremity, and the other part was of a jet black; the thigh bones were ten inches long, the legs five inches, the toes and claws were in proportion; and the legs were covered with black scales. The little nourishment which these birds find on the coast, except when a tempest throws up some great fish, obliges the condor to continue there but a short time. They usually come to the coast at the approach of evening, stay there all night, and fly back in the morning."

I now proceed to describe the construction and application of the wings of a bird. How properly are they formed to fulfil the uses they were made for! The first is to expand, and by that means to give the bird a secure hold upon the air below it, which hold is always in proportion to the dimensions of the wings. The tail produces the same effect. We see that by means of a pair of wings and a tail duly expanded, in a perfectly *passive state*, and aloft in the air, without any muscular action, a bird procures a suspending power, which counteracts the force of gravity and prevents its falling to the ground, causing at the same time a projectile force, which drives the bird forward; such is the effect of the wings and tail, when fully expanded in a *passive state*.

I will next take some notice of the quill feathers, which are replete with proofs of the wisdom of the Almighty artist who made them. As they were intended to swim with in so light and subtle a fluid as the air is, it was necessary that they should be formed of the lightest materials imaginable; and as they were intended to strike upon the air with great power and rapidity, it was requisite that they should possess, in the shafts, great strength with elasticity; it was expedient too, that the quill feathers should separate and open, to let the upper air pass through the wings, to facilitate their ascent, when they are struck upwards; it was also necessary that they should all shut close together, forming each wing into a complete surface or web, when they are by the muscular power of the bird forced down, in order to give a more secure hold upon the air below, and by that means keep the bird up.

Now if we do but examine the quill feathers, we shall find in the shafts astonishing strength with elasticity, and very little specific gravity indeed. The webs of the quill feathers are broader on one side of the shafts than the other, which causes them to open as the wings move up, and to shut as they come down, exactly answering the purposes I have already mentioned; therefore, we see how wonderfully complete the wings are in all their parts, and how effectually they serve all the uses required.

I will now shew the application and effect of the **wings and tail** in *an active* state. When a bird by the power of its pectoral and deltoid muscles, puts its wings into action, and strikes them downwards in a perfectly vertical direction upon the air below, that air being compressed by the stroke of the wings, makes a resistance by its elastic power, against the under side of the wings, in proportion to the rapidity of the stroke and the dimensions of the wings, and forces the bird upwards; at the same time, the *front edges* of the wings being formed with great strength, the back edges of the wings being weak and elastic, they bend to the resisting power of the compressed air, which then *rushes upwards past the same back edges*, acting against them with its elastic power, and thereby *causes a projectile force*, which impels the bird forwards; thus we see that by one act of the wings the bird produces both *buoyancy* and *progression*. If we turn our attention to the almost endless variety of birds and insects that traverse the air, we shall find all their wings constructed upon the same principles; the *front edges* of all their wings possess very *superior strength*, to the *back edges*; this beautiful display of infinite wisdom is to be even seen in the wings of the delicate little gnat. When the tail of a bird is forced upwards, and the wings are in action, the bird ascends, and forced downwards it consequently descends; but the *most important use of the tail is to support the posterior weight of the bird*, and to prevent the vacillation of the whole.

Thus having discovered and explained to my readers the natural mechanical means by which birds accomplish flying, they will be able to see that the plan upon which I have formed my scheme for artificial flying, is perfectly analogous to the principles of nature, which certainly ought to be clearly understood, and taken as our only guide, before we can ever expect to arrive at success in the art of flying; but with the knowledge and a right application of these principles, *there cannot remain a doubt of success*.

When we first think of a man attempting to fly by mechanical means, we are induced, considering his weight, to pronounce it impossible; and had we never seen or known of any bird larger than the smallest humming bird, whose weight does not exceed one drachm, and whose diminutive wings measure only three inches from tip to tip; and were to be told by some traveller, that he had seen a bird with a body as large as a sheep, that had wings of twelve feet expansion, and that it could quit the earth, and ascend into the air with its ponderous body, and there fly about with as much ease as the little humming bird; we should think it too marvellous a tale to be credited. But as we are accustomed to see, almost every day,

birds of such various size and weight as are exhibited by nature, from the humming bird to the common wren, from the wren, through a numerous gradation, up to the eagle, we can readily give credit to the history of the wonderful condor, in South America, whose existence is so well attested that we can have no reason to doubt of it; more especially as we witness so vast a gradation in the indigenous birds of our own country. I believe that there were two of these prodigious birds in the Leverian Museum, and I have seen one exhibited in a Caravan of Wild Beasts.

The following observations upon the wonderful difference in the weight of some birds, with their apparent means of supporting it in their flight, may tend to remove some prejudices against my plan, from the minds of some of my readers. The weight of the humming bird is one drachm, that of the condor not less than four stone; now, if we reduce four stone into drachms, we shall find the condor is 14,336 times as heavy as the humming bird. What an amazing disproportion of weight! Yet, by the same mechanical use of its wings, the condor can overcome the force of gravity with as much ease as the little humming bird, shewing that the same principles will produce the same effect upon any scale we can extend them to. But this is not all; we are informed that this enormous bird possesses a power in its wings, so far exceeding what is necessary for its own conveyance through the air, that it can take up and fly away with a whole sheep in its talons, with as much ease as an eagle would carry off, in the same manner, a hare or a rabbit. This we may readily give credit to, from the known fact of our little kestrel, and the sparrow hawk, frequently flying off with a partridge, which is nearly three times the weight of either of these rapacious little birds.

Let us attend to this subject a little further; let us consider these wings of the condor, which, with a *mechanical action alone*, produces a power that is capable of carrying through the air both the bird and the sheep, weighing together not less than ten stone, which would then be 204,000 *times the weight of the humming-bird!* When this is duly considered, with reference to my plan, what encouragement does it not give to prosecute the art of flying? particularly so, when we consider that a man of ten stone weight in a machine weighing two stone, will only exceed the weight of the condor *one-fifth part*; this is a mere trifle compared with the astonishing difference there is between the humming-bird and the condor.

The condor carries ten stone, with wings of twelve feet expansion from tip to tip; the humming-bird carries one drachm, with three inches expansion; the common wren is three times as heavy as the humming-bird, and has but one inch more of

wing; a pigeon weighs sixteen ounces, which is 256 times as heavy as the wren, and has only ten times more expansion of wing; the goatsucker is forty times as heavy, and has seven times the length of wing. I could here carry the same observations upon other birds to a very great extent, but the above instances are sufficient to prove that birds' wings are not multiplied in their length in the same proportion with the increased weight of their bodies. Then, as a man, weighing ten stone, and his machine two, will only exceed in weight one fifth part of the weight of the condor and his prey, this is calculated to give us great encouragement indeed!!

By attending to the progressive increase of the weight of birds, from the delicate little humming-bird up to the huge condor, we clearly discover that the addition of a few ounces, pounds, or *stones*, is no obstacle to the art of flying; the increase of the weight of birds *avails nothing*; for by their *possessing wings large enough*, and *sufficient power to work them*, the air, we see clearly, is equally capable of sustaining them; and they can accomplish the means of flying equally well upon all the various scales and dimensions which we see in nature.

Such being *a fact*, in the name of reason and philosophy, why shall not a man, provided with a car to sit in, with an extended passive surface, stretched out flat before him, and another of *equal* length and breadth behind him, both together sufficient to produce a *sustaining* force upon the air that will counteract three-fourths of the force of gravitation; and with a pair of active wings, each about four feet long, attached to the sides of the car, and with *sufficient power to strike them upon the air*, be able to produce a projectile force that will then much exceed the force of gravity?

I shall, after a few observations, proceed to shew how a machine may be made with a pair of wings, and a lever to work them with, so that any person will be able to see how far it is calculated to answer the purpose for which it is intended. This machine may be considered as a large artificial bird, and the man placed in the inside as the vital or moving power. All the attempts hitherto made in the art of flying, by different persons, according to historians, have been mere childish whims, not in the least degree calculated to ensure success; they each made a pair of detached wings, some of silk, some of leather, and some of sheet iron, and various other materials; they fastened them upon their shoulders or arms; thus equipped, they placed themselves upon some eminence, such as a high tower, or a church steeple, then took to their wings; but few of them were fortunate enough to escape without some injury.

It is utterly impossible for a man to fly, with a pair of wings fixed to his shoulders or arms, with the whole weight of

his body hanging down, and depending entirely on his pectoral muscles for support. These muscles in a man are many degrees too weak to keep extended a pair of wings of sufficient expansion to effectually counteract the weight of his body. Let a man suspend the weight of his body, with his arms extended, holding to an horizontal beam by his hands, and he will very soon find the insufficiency of the strength of his arms to support his weight. On the plan which I have conceived for flying, the want of strength in the arms is amply provided for. By furnishing a man with a car to sit in, with two passive surfaces fixed to it of sufficient extent, the whole weight of his body is thus supported; and, as he sits much in the same manner as if he were rowing a boat, he is enabled to bring into action his *whole bodily strength*, which *far exceeds* the strength of his arms only; and, by sitting in such a position, his strength can be applied to the active wings with a far greater force than in any other attitude whatever; he at the same time gains an *additional advantage*, in this plan of mine, by exerting his strength upon a lever.—*Vide plate No. 2.*

The two greatest requisites for accomplishing the art of flying, are these: first, *expansion of flat passive surfaces large enough* to reduce the force of gravity so as to **FLOAT** the machine upon the air with the man in it; second, *strength enough* to strike the active wings with a sufficient force to complete the buoyancy, and give a projectile force to the machine, superior to the force of gravitation. With these two requisites combined, *flying must be accomplished*; and, upon my plan, there can be no doubt of passive surfaces being made as large as ever they may be wanted; neither ought we to doubt of a man's ability, exerting himself in the way I have described, to bring into action as great a degree of strength, in proportion to his weight, as the condor is possessed of, and to be able to strike the active wings upon the air so as to produce a projectile force much exceeding the force of gravitation. Therefore, if we are secure of these two requisites, and I am very confident we are, we may calculate upon the success of travelling through the air with as much certainty as upon our navigating the ocean.

When I first discovered that the projectile force of birds is caused by having their wings formed with great strength along the front edges, and with the back edges very weak and elastic, it occurred to me that it would be of some importance to try what effect a pair of artificial wings, made upon the same principles, would have upon the air, expanded in a passive state, without any mechanical power to work them; I thought that if I were to suspend a weight from beneath them, they would prevent that weight from falling in a perpendicular line to the

ground, and at the same time dart forwards, and thereby demonstrate that the ideas I had conceived of the cause of the projectile motion of birds were well founded.

I therefore made the following experiment, to which I call the *particular attention of my readers*, as it *positively demonstrates the cause of the projectile motion*. I made a pair of small wings, of fine paper, and very small slips of wood extended along the front edges, with the back edges consisting only of paper, imitating, as near as I could, the wings of a bird when expanded in a *passive state*. I then suspended a small weight from under them with a piece of thread, exactly in the centre of gravity; I held them up as high as I could reach, then took away my hand and left them flat upon the air, without giving any impulse to them whatever; and, by the weight pressing downwards, the air under the wings became in some degree compressed, and, by its reaction against the under side and the back edges of the wings, *they were sustained upon the air and projected from one end of the room to the other, carrying the weight all that distance*, which, without the wings being of this particular construction, could not have been done.

I had cause sufficient to exult in the success of my experiment, which proved to me, in a very satisfactory manner, that what I had conceived to be the cause of the projectile motion of birds *was really the cause*, and that if I could but give a vertical motion to a pair of wings, so that they might strike upon the air with a sufficient force, they would then increase the reaction of the air against the back edges, so as to produce a projectile force which would totally subdue the force of gravitation, *and continue flying in an horizontal direction*.

This is an experiment which any of my readers may make trial of for their own satisfaction and amusement; and that they may be better able to comprehend me, I have given a representation of it in the plate annexed. *Vide plate No. 1.*

Another experiment, serving to shew the different effect of buoyance obtained by a parachute, and by my paper wings, may be tried in the following manner. Take two straight sticks, neatly dressed, square, but tapering smaller from the middle to the ends, about three-eighths of an inch in thickness, and each about sixteen or eighteen inches long, lay them across each other in the middle at right angles, and tie them fast with a piece of thread; then take a sheet of gauze paper, brush the sticks over with paste or gum, then stretch the paper well, and lay the sticks with the pasted sides upon the paper; when it is dried upon the wood, suspend any small weight by four threads from the four ends of the sticks; let the whole fall from a height, and you will see the effect of a parachute in miniature; but this effect is very different from that of the

Paper wings; the parachute *sinks gradually down in a perpendicular line*, whilst the wings *dart forwards* to the distance of several yards.

I have met with persons who have boldly asserted that it is impossible for a man to exert sufficient strength to raise himself up into the air by mechanical means alone; but the rashness and fallacy of such an assertion, is completely refuted and exposed by M. Degen, in Vienna, who has very lately actually ascended *into the air*, to a considerable height, by sitting in a machine and giving action to two parachutes; and had he properly understood the principles of birds' wings, and considered the astonishing power in the re-action of the air against the back edges of birds' wings, which may be *increased in proportion to any force* exerted upon it, *ad infinitum*, and possessed a complete knowledge of the principles upon which it enables birds to fly, he would have chosen wings, and not parachutes, and might then have produced a projectile force, and accomplished flying in perfection.*

There is no doubt, that by large parachutes, worked by a mechanical power, a man may raise himself from the ground to a considerable height; but that cannot be properly called flying; because, as the compressed air rushes from underneath the parachutes, to regain its equilibrium, *on all sides alike*, there will be no *projectile motion* effected, without which *there can be no command or steerage*; as that can *only* be obtained by going *through* the air, without which the whole apparatus will be driven whichever way the wind impels it; I therefore cannot give credit to that part of the account of M. Degen's performance, which asserts that he flew *in various directions*, although I can readily believe in his having raised himself into the air, and think that great praise is due to him. I do not believe it possible, upon his plan, that he could have gone in any other direction than *with* the wind: but with a pair of wings constructed, and worked, according to the natural principles of flying, a projectile motion is obtained in as perfect a manner as buoyancy, *both of which* must be accomplished before we can have the benefit and pleasure of flying with *steerage*, and that upon the following plan only, viz.:

Make a car of as light materials as possible, but with suffi-

* M. Degen, a watchmaker of Vienna, has invented a machine, by which a person may raise himself into the air. It is formed of two parachutes, in the form of an umbrella, of taffeta, which may be folded up or extended at pleasure, and the person who moves them is placed in the centre. M. Degen has made several public experiments, and rose to the height of fifty-four feet, flying, in various directions, with the celerity of a bird. A subscription has been opened at Vienna, to enable the inventor to prosecute his discoveries.—*Vide* the Monthly Magazine for September, 1809.

cient strength to support a man in it; provide a pair of wings, of about four feet each in length; let them be horizontally expanded, and fastened upon the top edge on each side of the car, with two joints each, so as to admit of a *vertical motion* to the wings, which motion may be effected by a man sitting and working an upright lever in the middle of the car. Extend in the front of the car a flat surface of slik, which must be stretched out and kept fixed in a passive state; there must be the same fixed behind the car; those two surfaces must be both *perfectly equal* in length and breadth, and large enough to cover a sufficient quantity of air to support the whole weight as nearly in equilibrium as possible; thus we shall have a great sustaining power in those passive surfaces, and the active wings will propel the car forward.—*Vide plate, No. 2.*

The grebes, by their manner of flying, evince that the most important use of a bird's tail is to support the *posterior weight* of the body; for the Creator having left the whole of this class of birds, of which we have five different species, indigenous in this country, all totally destitute of any portion of a tail, they are, consequently, always seen, when flying, to have their bodies hanging down nearly in a perpendicular direction, and appear to fly with great difficulty (*vide plate, No. 6*); but this impediment in flying is of little consequence to them, their organization being perfectly adapted to their mode of living. They find their subsistence in lakes and pools, wherein they are incessantly diving, and, of course, are not obliged to fly until those places are frozen up; when they are compelled to flutter off as well as they are able, in search of some spring or swamp which is not affected by frost, where they find a temporary subsistence until their favourite lakes are relieved from a surface of ice; they then return to their former haunts, where they again seem quite in their element. Here we find a class of birds, owing to their want of tails, possessing the power of flight in a very imperfect degree, compared with some birds: it also may be observed, that birds having extraordinary large tails, as the magpie, for instance, do not fly in the best manner; none of these birds possess what seems to constitute the excellence of flying, viz. soaring and reposing upon the air; this can only be effected when the weight of the body is upon an equipoise in the centre of the wings and tail, each bearing up its due proportion, and the expansion altogether so large, as to bring the whole weight nearly in equilibrium with the atmosphere. This must be properly attended to in the construction of a flying machine.

The wings and the passive surfaces should be made of silk, very compactly woven, and slightly done over with boiled linseed oil, to make it as impervious to the air as possible. The

silk which the active wings are formed of, should, perhaps, be **aid** on in separate broad slips, and should open to admit the **air** to pass through as the wings move up, and close together **again** as they come down, in the same manner as I have described the action of the quill feathers, in the wings of birds; **although**, upon the experiment being tried, this method may **not** be found so absolutely requisite; for we see flying squirrels, bats, butterflies, beetles, and all other insects which fly, and flying fish, &c. with wings formed of compact membranes, **all** flying exceedingly well. The Madagascar bat has a body the size of a rabbit, with wings four feet long, formed of entire membranes, and although so large, it can fly as well as our little native bats; therefore it is possible that a pair of artificial wings may be formed without any valves or slips, and yet answer equally well; but this can only be determined by actual trial.

It is necessary to observe, that the car in which the man is to sit, must be covered on the *two sides* with silk or very thin leather, and along each side of the car, the silk or leather must be *united* to the base of the wings, to prevent, as much as possible, the air from escaping any where but from the back edges of the wings; should that be neglected, when the air is compressed by the wings being struck downwards, it will rush upwards through the car, and thereby diminish that re-action of the air against the underside and back edges of the wings, which is necessary for the purpose of effecting buoyancy and progression. The front of the car may be net-work, as it will pass through the air with less resistance.

I think that the *shafts* of the wings would answer the purpose in the best manner, if they were each of them made of two long slips of thin whalebone, dressed tapering to a point, then wrapped together with small twine, and with pieces of cork along the inside, at the distance of about six inches from each other. By making them in this manner, they would spring against the air, would be very light, and so strong, that it would be impossible to break them with the power or weight of any one person. By forming them as above, we shall humbly imitate the shaft of a quill feather, which is composed of a thin horny shell, containing a delicate light pith along the inside.

I here recommend my readers to *particularly observe*, that a *main point in this treatise*, is, that they should not overlook the importance of the knowledge of the re-action of the air against the underside and *back edges of the wings*; for this is what causes the projectile motion, which is indisputably proved by the flying of my paper wings across a room, and which I will further illustrate by the flight of birds, mill-sails, &c.

I have frequently conversed with persons about the art of flying by mechanical means, and generally found them dis-

posed to treat the idea with ridicule; I have asked them if they knew how birds were enabled to fly, and they mostly answered me nearly in the following manner: that birds *could* fly because it was natural to them, that they were covered with feathers, which were such light materials as to help them to fly, and that their wings are properly adapted for flying. This was as far as they could explain, which proved that *all* they knew on this subject amounted to nothing. They generally seemed to indulge an idea, that there was something in the flight of birds either supernatural or incomprehensible; but I hope my readers will be convinced, by this little treatise, that the art of flying is as truly *mechanical* as the art of rowing a boat.

When I had convinced myself of having gained a *correct* knowledge of the cause of the projectile force of birds, I felt desirous of ascertaining how far it had been understood before; I therefore examined our encyclopedias, and all other philosophical books any way likely to contain the information I sought for; but no where could I find in print any light upon the subject; I was then induced to publish the knowledge of those principles, with instructions for making a car in accordance with the principles of nature, for the purpose of travelling through the air. Subsequent to my treatise being published, there has been printed a supplementary volume to the Encyclopedia Londonensis, wherein an explanation of the cause of the projectile motion of birds is inserted.

I will here further illustrate how flying is effected. The air, when struck upon by wings, produces an effect by its re-action against the underside and back edges, similar to that which is caused by the wind blowing with sufficient force against a mill-sail, when it *rushes off on one side*, and impels the sail to move, with this difference only, that the sail being fastened at one end to an axis, is made to revolve, whilst the bird, being at full liberty, and striking its wings upon the air, the expansive power of the air is acting with a resisting force *against the back edges* of the wings, and causes the bird to glide forward in a right line.

Most of my readers, I think, will acknowledge the great elastic power of the wind, as it is manifested by the sailing of ships, and the revolving of mill-sails; these effects are produced by the wind being compressed against the sails, from its own natural motion and force; but the effect the air has against the wings or sails of birds, is produced by its being compressed, with them striking vertically upon it; and the larger they are made, the greater quantity of air is compressed, by which means is caused a more powerful re-action, and consequently a more effectual buoyancy and progression. From

this cause, all the birds whose wings are *very large* in proportion to their weight, are able to fly with the *least exertion* imaginable; whilst birds with very small wings are obliged to use very great labour indeed; this being demonstrated by the examination of the dimensions of birds' wings, and the weight of their bodies, and by observing their different methods of flying.

I have often been delighted with the striking conviction, that supreme wisdom alone could have so nicely adjusted all the various internal and external organization of the vast number of different species of birds, to their diversified wants and modes of living; but it is only necessary to observe here, that all those which are under the greatest necessity of flying, are provided with the *longest* and *best proportion* of wings and tails, and are consequently able to fly in the best manner; and those which, from their manner of living, need them less, have them more limited, and are therefore less capable of flying; as if the all-wise Creator had set limits to their powers of flight, that they might not go out of their respective elements.

I observe amongst the aquatic birds, that the awks, guillemots, divers, &c. have such remarkably short and narrow wings, that they would be utterly incapable of keeping themselves up in the air if it were not for an exertion which they are obliged to make in the extreme. Their wings are moved with such rapidity as to be with difficulty discerned. In this we see the economy of the all-wise Creator, for according to their habits and appetites they have very little occasion to fly at any time, except during the time of incubation, when they have to ascend the most inaccessible rocks and cliffs they meet with along the sea shore, where they breed and rear their young; all the rest of their time they pass on or in the water, swimming and diving for their food.

All the gallinaceous class of birds have very short concave wings, which they strike with great exertion; they also, in general, have but little occasion to fly; their food, which consists principally of grain and seeds, being spontaneously scattered over the earth, they are almost constantly upon their legs, running about to pick it up, and seldom fly but to avoid danger.

On the other hand, rapacious birds, whose appetites induce them to be the greatest part of their time upon the wing, in search of a subsistence which is very precarious, (as every inferior bird, &c. to which they direct their sanguinary attacks, from that love of existence which God has so strongly implanted in all his creatures, will use its utmost skill and activity to elude its destroyer,) are much better accommodated; having wings of large dimensions they can repose upon the air, and project themselves forward with a gentle wafting. This is the

class of birds I would copy from in the construction of a machine for artificial flying. The kite or glead, P, B, Z, (or *milvus* from Lin.) is the best natural specimen that we can find in the British ornithology; this bird has very large flat wings, with a large forked tail, and flies with as little exertion, I believe, as any bird in the creation.

All the *hyrundo* class of birds, being destined to subsist entirely upon insects which inhabit the open air, are almost constantly flying; they all have bodies of little weight, have large flat wings, and fly with great ease. The goat-sucker, which is a species of nocturnal swallow, is admirably constructed for flying with facility.

As I have mentioned aquatic birds, I will here take the opportunity of execrating, with all the indignation of my soul, that savage and brutal amusement which they bring to my mind, and which so many persons frequently practise and take delight in; I mean the shooting these harmless and inoffensive birds, merely for sport. Many are the parties who resort to Flamborough head, for no other purpose than gratifying their vanity, by making a display of their dexterity in shooting, and causing all the havoc they possibly can amongst the poor inoffensive birds. Barren must be their minds, and callous their feelings, who can take pleasure in destroying these innocent creatures, which are not in the smallest degree offensive to man when they are living, nor of the least service to him when killed. If these GENTLEMEN could eat them when they have done shooting, that would be some excuse: but as their flesh is very rancid, these wanton barbarians have no relish for their game. I wish their humanity was as nice as their appetites, they would then not find delight in merely shooting them for sport and cruelty, leaving them, some killed and others wounded, floating on the surface of the sea, whilst their helpless young ones must consequently perish with hunger upon the shelvings of the rocks. Such amusements, surely, are not becoming rational beings, but may give pleasure to semi-rationals.

In the months of May and June, these birds, which during the rest of their time, are dispersed over various parts of the ocean, are brought by one of the great impulses of nature to assemble at Flamborough-head, in myriads; producing a throng, upon a great extent of cliff, similar to what we see in miniature, in the front of a bee-hive, on a fine summer's day, when there is a perpetual egress and ingress of thousands. A person who has never seen such a sight, and is capable of deriving pleasure from contemplating the economy and the works of nature, may find an exquisite gratification in paying a visit, at this season of the year, to Flamborough-head, with-

out having recourse to wanton acts of cruelty. Will there ever come upon the earth a generation of men, who will despise all pleasures that are either unreasonable or inhuman?

Reason and *humanity* constitute the *only permanent basis* of all human happiness, and the *real* honour and *true* glory of man ! without which he is but a compound of folly and madness, and is too often a vile mischievous brute. By a disregard and contempt of these two divine guides, families and nations become distracted, and are made miserable, as we have too amply witnessed in the deplorable and wretched state in which Europe has been so long afflicted, where the appetite of the cannibal has *only* been wanting to complete the brutality of *civilized* nations. But I am departing too much from my original subject; I will withdraw my pen from this sickening view of poor, frail, erring, human nature !

After having described how to construct a machine to fly in, which, like the swift, or great black martin, (*apus*, Lin.) cannot fly from the surface of the ground, but must have an elevation to start from ; it becomes necessary that I should give directions how it may be launched upon the air, which may be done by various means ; perhaps the following method may be found to answer as well as any : fix a poll upright in the earth, about 20 feet in height, with two open collars to admit another poll to slide upwards through them, let there be a square platform made fast on the top of the sliding poll, place the car with a man in it upon the platform, then raise the platform to the height of about 30 feet by means of the sliding poll, let the sliding poll and platform suddenly fall down, the car will then be left upon the air, and by its pressing on the air a projectile force will instantly propel the car forwards (*vide* plate, No. 4) ; the man in the car must then strike the active wings briskly upon the air, which will so increase the projectile force as to become superior to the force of gravitation ; and if he inclines his weight a little *backward*, the projectile impulse will drive the car forward in an ascending direction.—(*Vide* plate, No. 3.) When the car is brought to a sufficient altitude to clear the tops of hills, trees, buildings, &c. the man, by sitting a little forward on his seat, will then bring the wings upon an horizontal plane, and by continuing the action of the wings he will be impelled forwards in that direction. To descend, he must desist from striking the wings, and hold them on a level with their joints ; the car will then gradually come down, and when it is within five or six feet of the ground, the man must instantly strike the wings downwards, and *sit as far back* as he can ; he will by this means check the projectile force, and cause the car to alight very gently with a retrograde motion. The car, when up in the air, may be made to

turn to the right or the left, by forcing out one of the fins, having one about eighteen inches long placed vertically on each side of the car for that purpose, or perhaps merely by the man inclining the weight of his body to one side.—*Vile plate, No. 7.*

When I have seen a man sitting in a chair upon a tight rope, with a table before him, spread over with decanters, glasses, &c. and, by his *dexterity alone*, be able to keep himself and all his accommodations exactly balanced upon a single rope, while he sat smocking his pipe, apparently at perfect ease; I have been induced to consider the art of managing a flying machine, compared with such a surprising display of human dexterity, to be very simple, and see no reason why men should not become as expert in navigating the air as the ocean.

After the perusal of this work, I hope my readers will be fully convinced, that all attempts which have been hitherto made in the art of flying have failed, not in consequence of the art being impracticable, but from the natural science of flying having never before been understood. All that has ever been written, and all the experiments that have ever been made towards attaining artificial flying by mechanical means, display a chaos of unsettled thoughts very wide and deficient of the principles of nature; but I hope it will be granted that I have clearly discovered and demonstrated the whole of those principles upon which flying depends, particularly the *primary cause*, the *projectile force* of birds. This is a discovery of the greatest importance, for as the air is continually acting, in the manner I have described, against the back edges of the wings, and thereby impelling the bird forwards with great force, *it positively has as much tendency to overcome the force of gravity as the expansion of the wings has.* This is a fact demonstrated very clearly by my paper wings, and by the manner of flying peculiar to some birds, particularly the woodpeckers. When one of these extraordinary birds has struck its wings once or twice upon the air, and thereby produced a projectile impulse sufficient to force it forward to a considerable distance, it instantly contracts its wings *as close to its sides* as when perched on a bough, and continues flying several yards with its wings kept *close* in that position, until the impulse is abating; it then throws out its wings again, gives another stroke or two to renew the impulse, *shuts them up*, and is again driven forward, thus continuing to fly by distinct and separate projectile impulses alone. Here then we see the great importance of a true knowledge of the *cause* of the projectile force of birds, for this surprising bird does not depend upon a continued expansion of wings, to keep itself up in the air, but is kept up and carried forward by the projectile force alone!

The green woodpecker is about the size of a pigeon, and as it is very common in every part of England where wood abounds, many of my readers may have an opportunity of observing its curious method of flying; the same may be observed of the beautiful little goldfinch, and of linnets. Here the physico-theologist, who is accustomed to contemplate the wisdom of God in all his works, might be led to infer that he has caused this deviation from the general method of flying, in order to demonstrate to us the effect of the *projectile force*, and that it is one of the *greatest essentials* in the art of flying, and perfectly distinct from, and independent of, the continued expansion of wings.

When we see pigeons flying *upwards* in the angle of *sixty* or *seventy*, as we do every day, from the streets to the tops of houses, with the plane of their wings parallel to the line of their ascent; I think they prove, in a satisfactory manner, the great effect of the *projectile force* against the back edges of the wings, for without we admit this to be the cause of their ascending in such angles, how can we possibly account for it in any other way, upon rational principles? *Vide* plate, No. 5.

A stone thrown by the hand, and a ball ejected from the mouth of a cannon, are made to overcome the force of gravity, and fly to a great distance; we all know that these are not kept up by wings, but entirely by the projectile force. In fact, it is by the air being made continually to push the bird forwards by a projectile force, exceeding the force of gravity, which constitutes the main cause of flying.

We must attribute to a total ignorance of the fundamental principles, that the art of flying has not been brought hitherto into common practice; for an art, so practicable as it is, must at any period of time have soon succeeded a discovery, such as I have made; and now, that the art appears so very attainable, I hope that every friend to arts and sciences will acknowledge that it ought to have a fair trial.

I shall now conclude my treatise on flying, with an appeal to the candour and good sense of my readers, whether the arguments I have used, and the principles upon which I have insisted the art of flying may be accomplished, are not such as give it a just claim to their approbation, for I think I may affirm, without being accused of arrogance, that the art of flying has never before been treated of upon such rational and scientific principles.

I will offer an additional plan for *ensuring* success in navigating the air. Should it be found necessary, after giving the above plan a full and fair trial, to have an auxiliary power, the silk of the two extended *passive wings*, may be put together *double*, and then inflated with hydrogen gas; this would in-

crease the sustaining power, but I firmly believe **this will** not be required.

Having now submitted to the good sense of my countrymen, the whole of what I intended on the subject of flying, I, for the present, most respectfully take my leave of them, indulging a hope that the prediction of Bishop Wilkins, expressed in a former page, will soon be verified, and trusting that I shall not be disappointed in the hope which I entertain that, as we have mining companies, steam-packet companies, canal companies, railway and steam-coach companies, gas-light companies, &c., &c., we shall not be long without a company for establishing the art of travelling through the air, by mechanical means. I should then feel zealous in making still further exertions to advance and complete an art, the discovery of the *true principles* of which, I trust, I can with verity affirm to be exclusively my own.

FINIS.

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